

# **PCD** Partisan Defense Committee

Founding Member:  
Toni Randell  
1943-1982

Officers:

Chairman  
Paul Cooperstein

Secretary  
Judy Coshak

Treasurer  
Jake Braun

Staff Counsel  
Valerie West  
Jonathan Piper

Labor Coordinator  
Gene Herson

New York  
Representatives  
Kevin Gilroy  
Jeffrey Schanzer

Midwest  
Representative  
Brian Mendis

Bay Area  
Representative  
Karen Allen

Los Angeles  
Representative  
Kathy Ikegami

June 24, 2025

Ambassador José Miguel Alemán Healy  
Embassy of Panama  
2862 McGill Terrace, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20008  
[info@embassyofpanama.org](mailto:info@embassyofpanama.org)

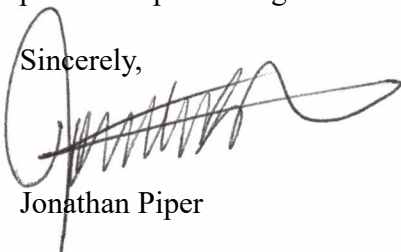
We write to protest the arrest of Francisco Smith and Gilberto Guerra, leaders of the Panama farm workers union Sitraibana. We demand their immediate release and that all charges be dropped.

For six weeks since late April, Smith and Guerra were at the head of a strike of banana workers against Chiquita in Changuinola, Bocas del Toro province. The strike brought the region's banana industry to a halt, and was joined by teachers, construction workers and peasants and indigenous peoples in protest of the hated Law 462 which privatizes the country's social security system and guts retirement. The protests also took aim at the sale of the country to large imperialist enterprises, mostly American.

The Sitraibana strike ended June 11, after the National Assembly agreed to restore workers' pension and labor benefits. But just days later the union leaders were arrested on bogus charges of crimes against public safety, damaging public infrastructure, and disrupting public order. President José Raúl Mulino has also vowed that none of the banana workers will get their jobs back. Since then, the government has suspended civil liberties and arrested dozens of other protesters. This is a calculated attack not just on Sitraibana but on anyone who would fight the imperialist rape of Panama.

We say: Drop the charges! Free Smith and Guerra! Hands off Sitraibana and all those who took part in the protests against Law 462! Restore all civil liberties!

Sincerely,



Jonathan Piper

The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

**Partisan Defense Committee**

P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013-0099  
P.O. Box 802867, Chicago, IL 60680-2867  
P.O. Box 74575, Los Angeles, CA 90004-0575  
P.O. Box 77462, San Francisco, CA 94107-0462

e-mail: [partisandefense@earthlink.net](mailto:partisandefense@earthlink.net)

(212) 406-4252  
(312) 563-0442  
(213) 380-8897  
(510) 839-0852

